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Voluntary - Public

Date: 7/1/2010

GAIN Report Number: 10009

Croatia

Post: Zagreb

Market Brief on Fishery Products

Report Categories:

Fishery Products

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Report Highlights:

Although Croatia is a net-exporter of fish and seafood products, it imports a significant quantity as well. Croatia's seafood imports declined from \$138 million in 2008 to \$102 million in 2009 due to the global financial crisis, but Croatia is expected to import over \$100 million in fish and seafood annually for the foreseeable future.

General Information:

Market Situation & Overview

Croatia is an excellent market for U.S. fish and seafood exports. Croatia's faltering fishing industry cannot meet rising demand for seafood as the country becomes a more popular tourist destination. Croatia's fish processing industry and fish breeding is also expanding and consequently demands more feed for tuna breeding.

Croatia's lengthy Adriatic coastline creates a significant amount of opportunity for the country to become a leading exporter of fish and seafood, but the fishing industry is beset by difficulties. The global financial crisis has threatened Croatia's fishing industry and hindered Croatian fish and seafood production. While Croatia has largely resolved its chronic shortage of fishing vessels, the purchase of new equipment has left many fishermen on the verge of bankruptcy. Many fishermen bought new, modern vessels and equipment through loans that they hoped to partially repay through government subsidies on capital investment. However, the government has stopped subsidizing capital investment thus now due to high interest rates and lack of funds many fishermen cannot repay their loans. The industry also suffers from inadequate transportation and storage infrastructure.

Croatia has a long tradition of fishing, fish breeding, and fish processing, and they are important sectors in the economies of coastal areas. While the fish population in the Adriatic Sea is low, there is a wide diversity of species. From 2002 to 2008 the registered catch of fish and seafood from the Adriatic more than doubled, from 20,198 MT to 48,976 MT, due to modernization of the fishing fleet. There are more than 40 fish processing businesses today in Croatia. Small blue fish dominate the catch and compose the majority of fish supplied to fish processing plants, with 18,000 MT of small blue fish processed annually.

In marine aquaculture, Croatia produces vast quantities of a limited number of species. Croatia hopes to introduce new indigenous fish and shellfish species, as well as modernize its existing fishing and processing facilities, particularly for tuna, sea bass, and gilthead sea bream breeding. About ten years ago Croatia began developing tuna farming for export to Japan.

Freshwater aquaculture production in Croatia has been increasing and now totals between 4,000 to 6,000 MT annually. The most important farmed species are carp and trout. There are about 40 companies registered in Croatia for freshwater farming, and many plan to link freshwater farming with rural tourism. Commercial fishing on the main Croatian rivers, the Sava and the Danube, is traditional but barely reaches 60 MT annually.

Market Size and Trends

In 2008 the annual average consumption of fish (fresh and salt water) and seafood per household member was 8.38 kg. The demand for fresh-water fish and seafood is expected to increase with modern changes in nutritional habits and increased demand from tourism.

The small blue fish is the most consumed fish on the national market, but due to changing nutritional habits and consumer

demand, salted fish production has significantly increased, including anchovies, frozen fish, smoked fish (smoked sea bass, eel, and freshwater fish), fish pâté, marinated fish, and others. The canning and packaging of marine fish, fresh-water fish, and other marine organisms is relatively new and has significantly developed over the past twenty years.

Imports and Exports

Croatia imports a significant quantity of fish and seafood products. Croatia's seafood imports increased from \$97 million in 2005 to \$138 million in 2008 with a slight drop to \$102 million in 2009. Croatia is expected to maintain fish imports of about \$100 million annually. From 2005 to 2009, Croatia imported fish mostly from Spain, Italy, the Falkland Islands, Norway, and Sweden. During the same period Croatia imported \$2.7 to \$4.9 million in seafood from the United States, primarily sardines, mackerel, cuttle fish, squid, and lobster. From 2007 to 2009 imports from the United States decreased from \$4.8 million to \$1.8 million, with sardines and mackerel taking a declining share of total fish and seafood imports.

Promising areas for U.S. exporters include fish feed for tuna production, fish for the local fish processing industry, sardines, and mackerel. Table 1 shows the ten most significant sources of fish and seafood exports to Croatia from 2007 to 2009, as well as the United States.

Croatia: Table 1. Imports of Fish and Seafood Products from 2007 to 2009							
Global Trade Atlas							
Year To Date: January - December							
Partner Country	United States Dollars			% Share			% Change 2009/2008
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	
Spain	27472371	18312188	16354145	23.08	13.23	16.00	- 10.69
Sweden	6671758	11556022	12541985	5.61	8.35	12.27	8.53
Italy	10574541	11212313	8072338	8.89	8.10	7.90	- 28.00
Falkland Islands	8607743	9749291	6421444	7.23	7.04	6.28	- 34.13
Norway	6910835	6695162	5472173	5.81	4.84	5.35	- 18.27
Thailand	5738256	7732735	5211043	4.82	5.59	5.10	- 32.61
France	3259473	6929963	3846206	2.74	5.01	3.76	- 44.50
Argentina	3062073	7081652	3815688	2.57	5.11	3.73	- 46.12
United Kingdom	3626944	4411394	3164845	3.05	3.19	3.10	- 28.26
Bosnia & Herzegovina	1127811	3996550	2938731	0.95	2.89	2.88	- 26.47
United States	4847660	4135722	1812017	4.07	2.99	1.77	- 56.19
World	119011121	138451903	102209126	100.00	100.00	100.00	- 26.18

Croatia is a net-exporter of fish and seafood products. Tuna takes the largest share of fish and seafood exports, with virtually all farmed tuna exported to Japan. Croatia exports most of its canned fish to Eastern Europe. Table 2 shows the ten most significant destinations for Croatian fish and seafood exports from 2007 to 2009, as well as the United States.

Croatia: Table 2. Exports of Fish and Seafood Products from 2007 to 2009							
Global Trade Atlas							
Year To Date: January - December							
Partner Country	United States Dollars			% Share			% Change 2009/2008
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	

Japan	63789705	55937705	58189362	42.00	37.37	35.49	4.03
Italy	52163776	50111428	53435795	34.34	33.48	32.59	6.63
Serbia	8141796	11236041	13285201	5.36	7.51	8.10	18.24
Bosnia & Herzegovina	7851821	8999276	10738731	5.17	6.01	6.55	19.33
Slovenia	5598010	7089623	7412583	3.69	4.74	4.52	4.56
Spain	5300512	5445783	6294906	3.49	3.64	3.84	15.59
Albania	889058	1352137	3965474	0.59	0.90	2.42	193.27
Montenegro	2000076	3072367	3122185	1.32	2.05	1.90	1.62
Macedonia	2220696	2176176	1469876	1.46	1.45	0.90	- 32.46
Turkey	0	0	1452264	0.00	0.00	0.89	0.00
United States	709806	209123	224116	0.47	0.14	0.14	7.17
World	151891850	149668701	163942354	100.00	100.00	100.00	9.54

Tariffs

Croatia has preferential bilateral trade agreements with several strong competitors for U.S. fish and seafood exporters, particularly the European Union. Agreements include free access for some products and tariff quotas for other products.

The latest customs rates can be found on the following website: <http://www.carina.hr>

Key Contacts and Additional Information

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A list of Croatian seafood importers and instructions regarding necessary certificates for exporting seafood to Croatia is available to U.S. seafood exporters and can be obtained by contacting:

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